

# Correspondence

The Editor does not hold himself responsible for the views expressed by correspondents. The names and addresses of the writers, not necessarily for publication, must in all cases, accompany letters intended for publication in these columns.

## THOSE CIRCUITS

TEN years ago I spent about a fortnight with a German flying school. Winter; the aerodrome snow-covered. The age of the pupils varied from 17 or 18 to 40 or 50. My knowledge of German was, and is, sketchy. I attended one lecture and understood one word—*moteur*. The machines were low-wing 200.h.p. monoplanes. The pupils did all the fatigue work connected with them. Their flying began with circuits, but only three in the morning and another three in the afternoon. Every flight was recorded in a book kept by the pupil on duty at the time. When the instructor thought a pupil fit he loosed him on his first solo—a circuit. The pupils had never flown anything else. Four hours saw most of them do that solo. The instructor would mutter "Brigand!" when the landing was made on one wheel, but when the pupil taxied up would say, "Very good. Take her round again." "*Fliegen heisst Landen*," he said to me. "*In Deutschland, ja*," I answered, "*aber, in England, Fliegen heisst Warten*." Waiting is worse than circuits!

Norfolk.

CANTILEVER.

## CAR-ENGINED AIRCRAFT

I THINK "Indicator's" remarks in *Flight* of November 5 call for comment. As explained by him, the chief reason why automobile motors can be secured at a lower price than aircraft motors is that the former are made in mass production on a large scale; this we will all agree upon. Nevertheless, if with a few simple alterations an auto engine can be utilised in a certain type of aircraft, why not take advantage of the situation to the benefit of the Little Man who desires to fly?

"Indicator" suggests that an aircraft motor can be secured for about another £100. Supposing it *were* as little as this, in the first place; I can assure all interested persons that the maintenance and replacement costs of the car engine will be less than 25 per cent. of those of an aircraft motor, and may I add that this item requires serious consideration when purchasing an aeroplane? Do not take my word for it; ask any private owner.

The certain type of aircraft to which I refer is the two-seater for a private owner who flies for the pleasure of flying and not for hire or reward. Therefore pay-load is not a serious consideration; and for a training machine where it is not necessary to carry luggage at all, and as most training is carried out in the vicinity of an aerodrome, the limited amount of fuel carried need not be seriously considered.

In the case of the Wicko, two persons are carried and, in addition, 45lb. of baggage with a cruising range of 250 miles at a speed of 100 miles per hour; this, I think, is a very creditable performance for a low-price machine.

As to "Indicator's" remarks about the mental comfort. If a car engine stands up to the rigid test laid down for aircraft motors, why shouldn't it be just as good and reliable as they are?

In the case of the Ford V8 converted by the Arrow Aircraft Co., of America, the motor stood up to 50 hours running on full throttle with an average speed within plus or minus 3 per cent. of the proposed rate of speed, and 50 hours at 75 per cent. of the proposed rate of power at propeller load speed; it now holds a Department of Commerce Approved Type Certificate No. 151.

At an early date the Wicko Ford conversion will be submitted for a British type certificate. This, however, only calls for 50 hours at seven-eighth full throttle and 50 hours with a calibrated airscrew.

To date the Wicko has flown nine hours and carried thirty passengers. The Ford V8 is functioning perfectly in its capacity as an aero motor.

"Indicator" errs in his statement that the Ford engine is the only make to be used in aircraft. I might mention that the Plymouth auto engine has recently been used in a Fahlin Monoplane in America.

London, E.3.

Foster, Wikner Aircraft Co., Ltd.

G. N. WIKNER,

Technical Director.

## THE PRIVATE OWNER'S IDEAL

LIKE most newspaper readers I am bombarded with accounts of records celebrating the cult of speed. In aerodromes I have to learn the use of flaps, forced on me because certain machines, built for speed, cannot get down comfortably without them. I am informed also that the "only thing" which the air-transport companies have to sell to the public is speed! I should have thought that a goodly number of travellers enjoy the marvellous views which are offered them—views failing which they would not wander by air at all. Directors, pilots and people in a hurry think otherwise. On the other hand there are those who, like Lord Cardigan (*Daily Sketch*, June 9, 1936, "Now for some Slow-Flying Records, Please"), consider speed an overrated luxury and very fast, small machines as unpractical and dangerous, condemning "a man-driven projectile shooting somewhat precariously from one remote aerodrome to another." [Mr. R. A. C. Brie made a very similar point in a letter in *Flight* of November 5.—Ed.]

And our wise counsellor "Indicator," always a progressive and acute critic, would apparently scrap the conventional small, fast aeroplane. He suggests as an ideal for designers "a minimum forward speed of not more than 10 m.p.h.; a gliding or approach angle which could be varied from 1 in 2 upwards; an undercarriage which would take a shock descending vertically at 20 m.p.h.; and so on." The first example, he suggests, might have a maximum speed of 70 m.p.h. (*Flight*, October 15). Well; the needs of warriors and men of business cannot be ignored, but the joy-flyers also must have their say. We have to get rid of a lot of flying ideals thrust on us by the war. We want to amuse ourselves fully and not ride on projectiles which in difficult country entail a long-drawn-out gamble with death.

Flying light aeroplanes, judged by the severe standards of good skating and mountaineering, is not a difficult art; it is one, in fact, suitable for elderly folk who can show a clean bill of health. This is because we draw mainly on our brains and nerves; like Wells's Martians, we control a mechanism which asks of us no muscular exertion worth the name. Even blind flying and stunts can be enjoyed after the sixties, while navigation is a perennial source of pleasure. Speed also is enjoyable at times, though it may be found that all aeroplanes travelling high up seem to be going slowly! But the supreme thrills of flight, as experienced in fine weather in a country like Switzerland, presuppose neither stunts nor high speed, while navigation is ordinarily a very simple affair. "Indicator's" 70 m.p.h. (and under) will provide all the speed which is necessary. Ability to travel and glide slowly amid and over mountains, above lakes, glaciers and valleys is the essential; even a good machine such as the Leopard Moth hurries one too quickly over the face of Nature. Have we available any machines which promise to do better? Yes; the Swallow and the Drone de Luxe among others. The fetish of speed is not worshipped and the joy-flyer can take his fill of beauty at minimum risk. But of course "Indicator's" ideals cannot be realised at a stroke.

There are times and places for conventional aeroplanes and high speeds, but there are many forms of flying in which slow going, slow landing, a pusher engine (with no troublesome slip stream) and a perfect outlook are indispensable to the same flyer. War and business—thank Heaven—do not exhaust human interests.

Switzerland.

DOUGLAS FAWCETT.

## Coventry Aero Engines Issue

NEGOTIATIONS are nearing completion for a public issue of ordinary shares in Coventry Aero Engines and Components, Ltd., which is expected to be made shortly.

The company has been formed to acquire the exclusive licence to manufacture and sell within the British Empire the Lorraine engine, which has attained considerable popularity in the aircraft and marine engine field, particularly abroad.

The issue will be sponsored by the Commercial and General Finance Trust, Ltd.